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**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**LS 6171**

**BILL NUMBER: SB 32**

**NOTE PREPARED:** Jan 14, 2011

**BILL AMENDED:** Jan 13, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Vote Centers.

**FIRST AUTHOR:** Sen. Alting

**FIRST SPONSOR:**

**BILL STATUS:** 2nd Reading - 1st House

**FUNDS AFFECTED:** ☒ **GENERAL**  
**DEDICATED**  
**FEDERAL**

**IMPACT:** State & Local

**Summary of Legislation:** (Amended) *Vote Centers*- The bill establishes the use of vote centers as an option for all counties. The bill requires the county election board (CEB) to adopt an order designating a county a vote center county, adopt a plan to administer the vote centers, and file the order and the plan with the Election Division. The bill requires the CEB to accept and consider public comment before adopting an order designating the county as a vote center county (VCC).

*Early Voting Locations*- The bill requires that the plan provide that at least one vote center be established for early voting on the two Saturdays immediately proceeding an election day.

*Vote Center Designation*- The bill provides that designation of a county as a VCC remains in effect until the CEB rescinds the order designating the county as a VCC and files a copy of the rescission with the Election Division. The bill automatically redesignates as a VCC a county previously designated a vote center pilot county.

(The law concerning the use of vote centers in vote center pilot counties expired after December 31, 2010.)

**Effective Date:** December 31, 2010 (retroactive).

**Explanation of State Expenditures:** *Vote Centers*- The Election Division would incur minimal additional administrative duties to file county orders for establishment of vote centers.

**Explanation of State Revenues:**

**Explanation of Local Expenditures:** *Vote Centers-* The establishment of vote centers could reduce the expenditures needed to conduct an election, including payment of fewer poll workers and printing of poll books. However, start-up expenses such as the procurement of an electronic poll book database could offset some of the potential savings. The impact on local expenditures would depend on the adoption of ordinances by county election boards (under unanimous approval) and resolutions of approval by both the county executive and county fiscal body.

(Revised) *Early Voting Locations-* The impact to local expenditures would be the cost for a single vote center to operate for two additional days. Costs would include poll worker compensation, ballot printing equipment, and if necessary, facility rental. The impact of this provision would depend on the potential turnout for early voting and dependent on local action.

*Background-* Reduction of local expenditures would depend largely on requiring one vote center per 10,000 active voters (in counties with 25,000 or more active voters). The following table depicts the number of precincts vs. the potential number of vote centers statewide (if all counties established vote centers at a 1-to-10,000 ratio).

Active Voters (3/19/2010)	Minimum Vote Centers (one per 10,000 voters)	Inactive Voters (3/19/2010)	Number of Active Precincts (1/25/2010)	Number of Precincts with Splits (1/25/2010)	2008 General Election Registered Voters	2008 General Election Actual Voters Voting
4,150,377	415	108,807	5,306	1,154	4,514,759	2,805,986

The impact would be overstated, if it were assumed the number of precincts coincides with the number of polling places. Some precincts are housed together in the same polling place and rely on the same voting equipment.

However, there would be an overall reduction in the number of *polling places*, if every county maintained a vote center for at least 1,000 or more active voters. Each precinct is required to maintain a separate precinct election board. Assuming a ratio of one center per 10,000 voters was closely followed, approximately 4,900 precinct election boards could be eliminated by vote centers. Elimination of boards would reduce per diem paid to poll workers. Any actual savings would vary by county, given many paid precinct election board positions go vacant due to shortage of poll workers or have been eliminated by their CEBs.

*Existing Pilot Counties-* At least three counties have been approved for vote center pilot status: Cass, Tippecanoe, and Wayne. Tippecanoe and Wayne Counties began as vote center pilot counties during the 2007 election. In 2008, Cass County was selected as the third vote center pilot county.

The main cost savings occur from reduced number of poll workers and lower per diem, training, and meal costs. Additional savings may be generated from fewer replacement voting machines needed for vote centers as opposed to traditional precincts.

On the expenditure side, an electronic poll list developed to meet the requirements of current law is a one-

time expense that would cut into the initial savings of vote centers. Additional costs would include the printing and mailing of cards for voters to bring on election day. Tippecanoe County initially spent \$10,750 for electronic polling software. It is estimated that printing poll books would have cost the county \$2,145 for the 2008 primary election. The county spent \$23,260 for mail voter postcards during the 2008 primary election.

Tippecanoe County reports estimated savings of approximately \$35,700 during the 2008 primary election by using vote centers instead of traditional precincts. The county had more than \$40,000 in expenditure savings during the 2008 general election. Savings occurred primarily from reduced poll worker per diem, no poll book printing, and no rental expenditures.

Cass and Wayne Counties reduced the number of precincts used in their elections as a result of vote centers. Presumably, there were savings from lower total per diem in these counties.

Per Diem- The following table illustrates average per diem of traditional precinct election boards.

Type of Officer	Number	Average Pay Per Election*
Inspector	1	\$129
Judge	2	\$97
Poll Clerk**	2	\$94
Sheriff**	2	\$106
Asst. Poll Clerk**	2	\$94
*Based on a survey of all counties with 57 responding. **May be eliminated by resolution of entire county election board.		

### **Explanation of Local Revenues:**

**State Agencies Affected:** Indiana Election Division.

**Local Agencies Affected:** County election boards.

**Information Sources:** Secretary of State, Election Division; Tippecanoe Board of Elections and Registration report: *Tippecanoe County Primary 2008 Looking Forward to Fall, June 2008* ; Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute report: *Vote Centers and Election Costs: A Study of the Fiscal Impact of Vote Centers in Indiana*; Counties responding to an LSA survey on precinct election officer per diem.

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